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Government, Not CIA, Working With LANL, Spokeswoman Clarifies

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LOS ALAMOS — CIA Director William J. Casey was referring to the U.S. government and not the CIA when he discussed in a speech a cooperative effort with Los Alamos National Laboratory on a Central American project, the agency said Wednesday.

The New York Times on Sunday paraphrased Casey as saying the CIA, in conjunction with Los Alamos National Laboratory, is designing a "pilot resource-assistance program" to help Central American nations.

Lab officials have denied the lab and the CIA are working together on the program. And CIA spokeswoman Sharon Foster, in a telephone interview from Washington, told a Los Alamos Monitor reporter Wednesday that it all boiled down to what Casey meant when he used the word "we."

She quoted from the text of Casey's speech, which was presented Sunday at the Center for the Study of the Presidency in Atlanta and focused on new ways for the West to reduce Soviet influence in the Third World.

"This country's strategy in the Third World must go beyond supporting freedom fighters," Casey said. "In addition to doing what we

can to support indigenous resistance to Soviet backed repressive regimes, we have to come to grips with the core developmental problems of the Third World and how the West's technological ingenuity, its entrepreneurial talents and its free markets can be brought to bear there.

"We continue to exploit Soviet vulnerabilities through traditional intelligence methods but we are also moving on a broader non-traditional front as well.

"For example, in conjunction with Los Alamos National Laboratory, we are involved in designing a pilot resource assistance program in Central America."

Foster said when Casey used the word we in talking about the lab, "the director meant the U.S. government" and not the CIA.

She said Casey then went on in the speech to discuss the program in more detail.

John Whetten, the lab's associate director for energy and research applications, said Wednesday in Los Alamos that the lab has been engaged in such a program for about 18 months.

The program is designed to identify alternatives to imported oil, including geothermal and hydroelectric sources and peat deposits.